

## To be a Man

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## To be a Man

by Anonymous

### Summary

Severus Snape was a feral creature. This observation was used by his parents to justify his more “strange” behavioural quirks. That he wanted to be called “Severus” for one.

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This is mostly a vent fic about transphobia, I hope the tags make that clear. Also, fuck JKR.

### Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Severus Snape was a feral creature. This observation was used by his parents to justify his more “strange” behavioural quirks. That he wanted to be called “Severus” for one. His mother worried that this might “encourage” him, but his father just laughed and roared: “Let her be! She’s far too ugly to be a girl anyway!”. So that was that. There were some troubles with his parents “slipping up” and using his old name, but Severus just didn’t listen when that happened, and even though it earned him some beatings, his parents finally learned that misgendering him was more trouble than it’s worth.

His mother was better about his new name than his father, though she only ever dressed him in her old blouses and preferred him to keep his hair long. The hair wasn’t a problem, after he’d went to the hairdresser for “short hair” once and got an “adorable” pixie cut, Severus was all for growing

his hair out. It's a gender neutral look in his mind (and the wizarding world) anyway. The clothes on the other hand bothered him greatly but his mother explained to him kindly that they didn't have money for anything else. He was an exceptionally smart kid but it took him until the age of ten to figure out what absolute bollocks that was, especially after he saw how cheap a simple T-shirt could be.

When he's a teenager his mother broke down crying in front of him, once, and wailed about what his gender had put her through. She'd been convinced that a boy would inevitably grow up just like his father, the person that was probably her greatest fear and still, she professed her love to Tobias Snape on the regular. She did not do so for Severus and was all too happy to stand aside when Tobias needed to let out some of his anger on him. She'd explained it to Severus once, how daddy just sometimes couldn't help himself, because he worked a very stressful job, and beating the living daylights out of Severus once and again made him able to deal with that stress and stay working that job. What were a few bruises in exchange for regular meals on the table?

So Severus had to understand the relief Eileen had felt at the news of having a pretty little baby girl, who she'd be able to raise in her image, without any influence of Tobias, who had no interest in anything other than a healthy boy. Severus had to understand the sinking feeling in her gut as he refused to be put into dresses anymore and Eileen produced a photograph of him in a dress, age two. This had been the last time she was happy, she told him. The name had been another stake in her heart. She'd been so relieved when he started chatting with that Evan's girl, she'd hoped that she would be a "good" influence on him, though she was a mudblood, at least she knew how to be a proper girl.

His mother had also been the one to clothe, feed and wash him, to comfort him when he got bullied for either being a pansy or a dyke, because they were just muggles after all, nasty and dumb, and to show him the wonders of the wizarding world, to teach him all kinds of spells as soon as he was grown enough to hold his own wand. Most of them were rather dark, as he would later learn, and not part of the average wizard's curriculum.

His father was both more and less accepting of him than his mother. He would often moan about Severus not being manly enough, to focused on his books and not interested enough in "real" life. After Severus insisted on his name, Tobias started to beat the crying out of him, to help him become a "real" man. He also congratulated Severus on his "decision" multiple times, especially when Tobias had done something to make Eileen cry, because everyone knew that boys were better than girls in any way, smarter and stronger and tougher, and not wimpy enough to cry at every little discomfort that came their way. Though whenever he got angry with Severus he'd remind him of what he "really" was, called him overtly feminine nicknames with heavy sarcasm and once even pulled his pants down to show him "reality". Tobias laughed when bunched up socks tumbled out of Severus' pants, picked them up and shoved them into Severus' face and called him a little pervert. Severus stopped packing after that, shame burning hot and heavy in his gut.

His one and only friend throughout childhood remained Lily Evans, who does not know of his past when they meet. He can be just Severus with her, and it makes his whole childhood just a little more bearable.

One day, Lily looks a bit confused, closely considers him through squinted eyes and says: “My parents said that you’re a girl.” And then she even says his Dead Name. And with a sinking feeling Severus realizes that her parents must have talked to his mother and frustrated tears spring into his eyes. He shakes his head, “That’s not me. I’m Severus. Severus Snape. I would not have lied to you, Lily.” She squints a little more at his face and finally shrugs her shoulders, “Alright, Severus, why don’t we catch that butterfly over there?”, and that is that. Things are easy with Lily then.

They talked a lot about Hogwarts. On some days the thought of it was the only thing that kept Severus going. When the day of his departure to Hogwarts finally came, Severus was almost giddy with ecstasy, infecting Lily with his heightened spirits. They promised each other that they would stay best friends no matter what happened, even if they land in different houses. This was when Severus’ life was supposed to turn around, to grant him a fresh start. He’d finally be free from his parents influence.

It doesn’t work like that. Of course. Severus wants to curse himself for his naivete. They might all have slept in the same dorms, ate the same food in the Great Hall and worn the same clothes, but it was still plenty evident who had money and who had not, who came from a wizarding family and who did not. And Slytherin might have been the worst house for somebody in his position, as Severus quickly realizes. He’d always clung to the Prince name like a lifeline, but the Snape at the end of his name did make it rather obvious that his blood was far from pure. Tainted. Why the Sorting Hat would be mad enough to let someone with a muggle surname into Slytherin he didn’t know. He didn’t last a week before the bullying from his housemates started. Anger almost overwhelms him when he remembers who glorious his mother’s tales of the House of Slytherin had been. Of course, she had been Eileen Prince, one of the last descendents of an old and honourable line, her blood considered as pure as freshly gathered unicorn tears. Severus lies on his bed and silently sobs into his pillow as he feels like a lamb that was led to the slaughter house. Not that any other House would have been much different. Potter and his cronies have made that obvious. His blood status might not matter as much to them, but Severus is still a poor, ugly loner and nerdy to boot.

It didn’t take long for Severus to spend the majority of his time alone, in the library. He and Lily have been drifting apart, despite their promise, since they got sorted into opposing Houses. Even though Severus resents the implications of being abandoned, it has been mostly Lily that’s done the drifting. Unlike Severus, who had been alienated from his House since the very first time Professor McGonagall had read his name, Lily fit into hers like a long-lost puzzle piece, creating a second home for her since day one. Severus, whose heart feels rather homeless at the minute, tells himself that he’s not jealous, and an image of Lily laughing at the Gryffindor table swims in front of his mind’s eye.

At first, it had just been a time scheduling issue. Lily had suddenly a lot more people she wanted to spend time with, and Severus had become one of many instead of being her best friend. That downgrading of their relationship hurt, but Severus could live with that.

After a certain while though, Lily began to spend even less time in his presence and when they did meet, it was in more and more secluded places, places where they wouldn’t be seen together. He addresses the topic, and she deflects at first, staring somewhere over his right shoulder: “I thought you’d be glad not to be seen with someone like me.” She is right, of course, in the beginning it was

him trying to desperately hide their friendship from his housemates.

“You were outraged by that, though.”, he answers.

She bites her lip. “You’re seen as somewhat of a bad influence. It’s easier when they don’t know I’m hanging out with you.”

Severus feels his lip curl into a sneer. Inter House politics. Even Gryffindors had them. Nice to know that associating with him was seen as a bad idea no matter what House you belonged to. “It couldn’t be that Potter and his gang have something to do with that, could it?”, he muses aloud.

Lily refuses to respond and they change the subject. Severus knows the answer anyway.

They meet less and less, their lives separating more and more. It’s only after the incident in the Shrieking Shack when Severus seeks out Lily, because even hours after, his hands are still shaking from the adrenaline of being almost killed, that he realizes how far apart they really are. He tries to tell her that the Marauders did something horrible to him, though he can’t share any details because of the Headmaster, and instead of realizing his distress as she would have when they both were kids she instead lets herself be consumed by doubt for his outlandish claims about her housemates. Somewhere along the lines her trust in him had waned without him even noticing. Were it not for the check-up with the Mediwitch in the hospital wing he had to go to after the incident, Severus might even have started to doubt himself. The Marauders are given no punishment and Dumbledore seems rather more focused on sweeping the whole affair under the rug than anything else. Nothing seems to have changed, apart from Severus getting less sleep because of his nightmares and being a lot more jumpy and emotional than he was before. Everything else is as it was. Severus wants to scream.

The lake incident. The Marauders humiliate him. Severus lashes out against Lily, calling her a “mudblood”, inevitably snapping their fragile bond, built on memories and nostalgia more than anything else. The Marauders strip him bare in front of the whole school. The potions needed to change your genitalia are a little too expensive to brew for his meagre purse. The Marauders almost get a harsh punishment for that, before Sirius Black argues that they couldn’t possibly have known what really was in Severus’ pants, so they only get detention for a week. After that Slughorn calls Severus into his office to apologize profusely for how the school must have gotten his name wrong and how Severus was forced to sleep in the wrong dormitory for years, and that Slughorn had already instructed the House Elves to transfer his belongings to the girl dormitory.

Severus smiles tightly and is forced to explain how him being a boy had not been some elaborate mix-up Severus had been too idle to do anything about for over four years. Slughorn evidently doesn’t understand but finally relents to let Severus sleep with the other boys.

Time goes by, life goes on.

Someone passes a little note to Severus “Do you want to be my girlfriend?”, and it is addressed to Severus’ Dead Name. Severus knows that only one person could have known that about him. It is probably no coincidence that Lily and Potter started dating recently. No secrets between lovers, eh?

He confronts her about it. She’s tense and brusque at the beginning, tries to tell him that it was an accident before he manages to get under her skin.

“I haven’t really been friends with you for years,” she finally screams, “and they still called me a lesbian for having spent too much time with you and sticking up for you when you got your pants pulled down. The other girls even refused to change in front of me and petitioned to get me out of their dormitory. Defending you has brought me nothing but trouble, and I was sick of it.”, the last part she almost spits out.

That’s the last time they spoke.

Becoming a Death Eater opens up the resources for Severus to brew the potions he needs to finally align his body with himself.

He quickly realizes though that the discrimination against him is not based on his genitals, when somebody “slips up” and calls him “she” or “it”, it’s not based on his present body or his deep voice, it is based on Severus’ past and the other’s prejudice. It is about what Severus is, not what he does.

Quite like the purity of blood the other Death Eaters like to think so highly of.

## End Notes

Hogwarts is a shithole. In this story, Lily, Severus and the Marauders all do shitty, messed up things, but I think their environments are largely to blame.

The adults in all of their lives failed them rather spectacularly, especially the teachers at Hogwarts and its headmaster, Dumbledore.

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